GUIDE TO THE FO4 PYGMIES FILE

[According to the Outline of World Cultures, the FO4 Pygmies cultural unit includes general data on the Pygmies of Central Africa as a whole, and specific data on the Pygmy tribes of Zaire, including the Bambuti (Mbuti) of the Ituri Forest. Pygmy groups are scattered throughout equatorial Africa, especially in the area of the Gabon and the Ubangi, as well as in Zaire. In Zaire there are three main groups of Pygmies, the Tswa in the West, the Twa between Lake Kivu and Lake Tanganyika, and the Mbuti of the Ituri Forest. According to Turnbull, only the Mbuti are true Pygmies, that is, under 150 cm. in height, and relatively unmixed with neighboring peoples. The other groups are referred to as "Pygmoids," being highly intermixed with other peoples and very acculturated. Consequently, the FO4 Pygmies file contains only specific data on the Mbuti Pygmies of the Ituri Forest.

The Mbuti are located at approximately 20^{o} - 30^{o} East longitude and over several degrees both north and south of the equator. Their territory is a primary rain forest. The Mbuti have been divided into three groups, which according to Turnbull, have very little sociological significance. The groups do, however, each have distinctly different languages (which correspond to the languages spoken by neighboring villagers), are territorially distinct, and practice different hunting techniques. The Aka live in the North, speak the Mangbetu language which is of the Sudanic family, and they hunt primarily with spears. The Aka have not been extensively studied. The Efe are in the East; they speak the Lese language of the Sudanic family and they are archers. The Efe were studied by Schebesta. The Sua are in the

South, speak the Bira language of the Bantu branch of the Benue-Congo family, and they hunt with nets. The Sua were studied by Putnam and Turnbull, the authors represented in this file. Therefore, most of the data in this file refers to the Sua net hunters only.

In spite of the considerable differences between the three groups of Mbuti, they have a strong sense of ethnic unity. Even though the language differences are considerable, "... any Pygmy from any area in the Ituri can recognize though not comprehend any other Pygmy speaking a totally different language because, throughout, the intonation is remarkably similar, absolutely distinctive, and different by far from the intonation used by the Negroes whose language is being spoken." (2: Turnbull, p. 23).

Turnbull states that since there has never been an official census of the population it is impossible to give an accurate estimate of the total Mbuti population. From discussion with missionaries and administrators and from his own experience, Turnbull guessed that the population was approximately 40,000.

The Mbuti were hunters and gatherers who live in small nomadic bands of from three families up. Each band was attached in a kind of symbiotic trade relationship to a neighboring Negro agricultural village. The Mbuti traded meat for plantation products. There was no form of chieftainship and no apparent mechanisms of social control.

There are four sources in the FO4 Pygmies file. Numbers 1-3 are all by Turnbull and are based on fieldwork done among the Epulu band of net hunters during the 1950's. 1: Turnbull is based primarily on secondary sources and he compares data from the Epulu net hunters with data from Schebesta who studied archers and whose major work on the Mbuti was published in 1938. 2: Turnbull is on cultural factors contributing to cohesiveness of Mbuti bands and their independence of village control. 3: Turnbull is a narrative of the band's reaction to the death of one of its members, and of rites and attitudes related to coming of age and marriage. 4: Putnam is on the same band of net hunters which Turnbull studied. It gives sketchy information on a number of topics. As pointed out earlier, the data in this file are based on fieldwork done on one band (the Epulu) of the Sua group of the Mbuti.

There are a number of special marking decisions for the FO4 Pygmies file. 648 and/or 177 are used for the relationship between the Mbuti bands and the villagers in general terms; 439 has been used for economic aspects of the relationship; 571 and 578 were used for the relationship on an interpersonal plane; and 571 and 608 were used for the kpara relationship between individual Mbuti and villagers. For the Mbuti conceptualization of the "forest" as a spiritual entity, a personified benevolent force, 778 was used. Discussion of Mbuti kinship in general was marked for 602 when the author was speaking of kin relations within the band as such. 613 or 614 were used in more limited cases, when the author explicitly applied village lineage terms and expectations to the loose and vague Mbuti kinship relations. The life force, pepo, was marked for 761 or 778. Keti, the disembodied spirits of humans and animals, was marked for 776 or 769. Boru, the human or animal body inhabited by pepo was marked for 778, 761, or 826. The personality of the individual composed of a

particular boru and pepo which dies with the individual, called roho, was marked for 828 or 778. Satani (Shaitani), malevolent and dangerous spirits, were marked for 776, 769, or 775. The rather nebulous concept of a Godhead, a spiritual being who is the source of spiritual force, was marked for 776 or 778. Megbe, the vital force emanating from the totem and immanent, to different degress, in all human beings, was marked for 778 or 761. The Molimo mourning ceremony was marked for 765 or 534; as an association, it was marked for 575. The file was processed in 1970-1972.]